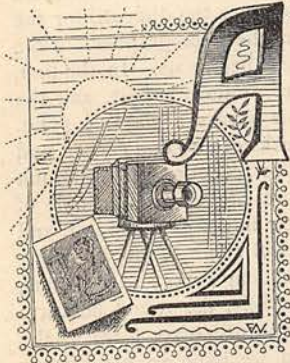


AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHY.



As a fact, it can scarcely be gainsaid that the art side of nature is capable of giving the most pleasure to the largest number of people. It is not every one who has the time or talent for studying her from the science point of view; though to those who possess both, the enjoyment felt is perhaps the most intense, and is more frequent since everything from the smallest microscopically discerned atom to the loftiest mountain, and to most distant star, is a subject for admiration and research. Nothing is too small and insignificant, and nothing is too large or complicated for such a student. Unfortunately there are some who allow both aspects of nature to be unobserved, and these lose a mental enjoyment for which nothing merely physical can compensate.

What is it that makes a denizen of our closely packed towns wish for a run in the country, and that a pretty part of it? Perhaps it is a longing to enjoy the fragrance of the wayside flowers, to bask in idleness and lazy thought in the shade of the glorious trees, and to listen to the sighing of the wind making soft harmonies in the branches. So far, such longing may be said to be sensuous, but if the mind be touched by the look of nature herself, and the enjoyment produce mental activity, then the art chord is struck. There are many who feel this enjoyment, and who desire to carry back to their homes some souvenir, however small, of the scene which has given them a sense of mental elevation, and which would enable them to recall the sensations of pleasure they felt stirred within them. The pencil or the colour-box may be strange in their hands, and they may lack the manual dexterity to use them. It may be that they have not time to spare to undergo the drudgery of learning the mysteries of such art, and shrink from the ordeal of wading through those freehand copies of curious scrolls which delight the great ones at South Kensington, and without which the eye and hand are not supposed to be trained. Can nothing be done to help these—no other means of cultivating the art innate within them? Fortunately there is—photography. A few years back photography was a black art, judging by the hands and often the clothes of its devotees, and this alone prevented its employment by many who otherwise would thankfully have made it an ally. But *nous avons changé tout cela*. Progress has been made in the manipulations, and processes have been so simplified that the stigma of "uncleanness" has been taken away, and a persevering tyro may command success. The influence that photography has had on

art is undoubted, and without offence to our prominent artists, it must be said that it has made the pictures of to-day truer to nature than those of fifty years back.

A day in the country to one accustomed to the camera means something totally different from a day in the country to one who has no pretence of a love of art, and it behoves the former to beware of seeking the companionship of the latter unless an explicit compact be made beforehand. The mere pedestrian whose sole object is to exercise his limbs and cover so much ground during the day will, as a rule, consider the devotee of photography a nuisance, and his camera an unmitigated bore. The companionship of a brother in the art, however, is to be sought, as there is a certain healthful stimulus given to the perceptions through competition. We have been frequently asked as to the apparatus required by the amateur for his day's excursions, and it may probably be an encouragement to some if a few words are said on the subject. The sizes of plates that are used vary so much that a selection is somewhat difficult. Of one thing we are certain, that in order to prevent the day's outing from being anything but a pleasure the load carried should be light. Some of our mountaineers tell us that from 14 to 20 lbs. in weight may be carried conveniently on one's back for a whole day without much sense of fatigue; but it must be remembered that this has reference to those who are in tolerable training. For an ordinary mortal the weight carried should not exceed 14 lbs., and even then the load should be distributed about the body in such a manner that fatigue of any one part is avoided. A friend of ours who is a great pedestrian, and every summer wanders into the Tyrol or Switzerland, and carries his knapsack for his whole kit, manages to include about 4 lbs. weight of photographic apparatus with him. His plates are small, about three inches square; and he is able to take his camera and perhaps three dozen dry plates with him, and thus to secure reminiscences of his travels—and very charming they are even to those who have not had the fortune to have made a personal acquaintance with the scenes themselves—beginning perhaps in some quaint Swiss town, gradually taking you up the icy slopes of Monte Rosa, and finally landing you at Boulogne. Such a size of picture, however, is usually too small, and our friend finds the interest in them increased many-fold by enlarging them on his return home. For the ordinary amateur this last process is not to be thought of unless he have spare time at his command, or can afford to get the enlargements made for him by some professional; so we recommend a larger size of picture, say 7½ inches by 5½ inches. This gives a pretty shape, not too narrow, when the pictures have to be taken with the 7½ inches in a vertical direction, and yet not too broad for the picture when the greatest length is horizontal. The equipment with its weight is shown in the following column:—

| | lbs. |
|--|------------------|
| Camera | 3 |
| Dark slide | 1 |
| Changing box to hold one dozen plates | 5 |
| Lens... .. | $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Focussing cloth | $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Set of camera legs and stand | 2 |
| | 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ |

Here, then, we have an equipment weighing nearly 12 lbs., with which we may be able to secure a dozen pictures, and which can be slung about the body in such a manner as to distribute the weight. The changing box is a box holding a dozen plates, which can be prepared by a method we shall give presently, and from which a plate can be placed in the dark slide without seeing light. The exposed plate is first slipped into the box, and the dark slide is then refilled from the changing box itself.

Such a kit is very different from that required in the old days, when the wet process was the only one which would give certain results; for then we were troubled with dark tents, bottles of solutions, and any number of *etceteras*, in order that the picture might be developed on the spot. By the present arrangement we are saved all these encumbrances, and the photographer may plant his camera on any spot to which he can travel himself, without being hindered by the consideration as to whether his other baggage can follow him. As to the preparations which a day's outing require, they are small, particularly if economy is not the great object; for in the market there are numerous brands of dry plates, more or less good, which can be made use of at a moderate price. Our own advice is to purchase one kind of plates, and prepare the others. The plates to be purchased are those known as gelatine plates, and they are most excellent for certain purposes, such as instantaneous pictures of cattle, street scenes, and such other views in which there is a state of unrest in parts. They are exquisitely sensitive, and an exposure in the camera of a quarter of a second in bright light will give every detail which is thrown on the focussing screen of the camera. For ordinary views, however, we recommend the amateur to purchase from some well-known house a few ounces of what is known as washed collodion emulsion, and to prepare his own plates, and if to such an emulsion we recommend the addition of one-sixth part of its bulk of a solution of gum guaiacum in alcohol, we think the chances of success are increased. Then the manipulations in the preparation of the plates are so simple. The problem is reduced to this: in a room lighted by a candle shaded with a red shade you are given a bottle of sensitive emulsion and a clean glass plate; it is required to coat the latter with an even film of the former. That is all! There is really no difficulty in it. The emulsion flows over the plate like oil, and any excess is allowed to drain off. When the solvents employed in the emulsion have partially evaporated, the plate is reared up in a box to dry. This desiccation takes, perhaps, one hour to effect; when complete it is ready to be transferred to the changing box already described. The dozen plates, in fact, may be

prepared at nine o'clock at night and be ready for use at ten, if the room be moderately warm. Only beware of dust, and the plates will be a success.

Now as to where to go. The localities are infinite. "Bits" too insignificant (perhaps too difficult) for the sketcher are often gems for the photographer. Take two examples which we have before us. In the first, the day is evidently one of summer's best, and the student of nature has come across a wayside pond. The wind has blown the duckweed to one corner, and in the mirror-like surface the reflections of the trunk and branches of an ash are broken by a couple of cows which are cooling their limbs in the water, and seeking shade from a powerful sun. A rough-looking hedgerow, with its bottom of long grass and flowerets, helps to make the picture, whilst the round boulders immediately in front give the necessary force to the foreground. In the second, we have an old cottage with its broken-down gables and quaint lattice windows, and an octogenarian occupant has been made to "sit" naturally in the porch, forming a most suggestive picture. "Bits" such as these are to be met with close to London or any of our provincial towns, and many a spare afternoon has been spent by ourselves and other amateurs in a friendly art competition over them. If the amateur, however, should wish to make a more extended tour, there are many localities which will give exquisite subjects for the camera. Perhaps there are no two spots from which a more varied selection can be made than Lynmouth and Bettws-y-Coed. The Devonshire village is on the sea, and the cottages lining the road leading to the roughly formed pier, with its tower head, form pictures from almost every point of view. By walking some two miles inland, along the valley of the Lyn, the pedestrian plunges at once into the "waters meet," where numberless varieties of tree, rock, and fern are mirrored in the stream which runs through it. The Welsh valley is more extended, but the scenery is totally different. The ivy-clad bridges of the village, the river running between groups of magnificent trees, and the moss-coloured rocks that form part of its banks, are subjects on which an innumerable number of changes may be rung, whilst a ramble up the Lledr valley will give him views of hill scenery which are almost unique for beauty in their combination of water, rock, distant mountains, and trees. It may safely be said that where there is a stream or a lake there is an opening for photography. Killarney, the Cumberland lakes, the Thames, the Wye, are all localities in which a pleasing photograph is more than a probability, whilst if we journey up to Scotland, and can make our way to Loch Maree or Skye, we have scenery which is totally different in character to anything in England or Wales.

Now as to how to make the best of a picture. It is almost impossible to give rules in a short paper, and were they laid down, in all probability it would be found that the most successful pictures are made by those who know *when* and *how* to break through them. There is a certain amount of practice required in choosing a subject, for though we may

look on the focussing screen of our camera and see upon it a view that in chiaroscuro seems perfect, yet when photographed it may prove unsatisfactory. The reason is that the photographer, besides observing the ordinary light and shade, has to translate the colours into blacks and whites. Thus dark green will come out black in the print of a photograph, whilst the blue sky will be nearly white; the yellow bracken and the blue-bell which, maybe, add such value to the foreground, will have a totally distinct effect where such translation is made. Hence it is that practice is required to obtain a photograph which shall prove entirely satisfactory to the artist.

Of all the banes of photographers, however, the worst are the human race. Gentlemen in tall hats, ladies dressed in the height of fashion, or villagers who cannot stand still will often mar a picture; but by a little persuasion they can generally be made subservient to the photographer, or at all events can be made non-obtrusive. We well remember one quaint village in Kent where we were photographing a "bit." The whole village put on their best garments, and asked us to take their likeness (price no object). Nothing *would* content them, but they must have their "likeness took." Luckily we had a friend with us who, after we had focussed the subject that we wished to take, skilfully grouped the Darbys and the Joans together in such a way that they were out of the field of view. When thus arranged we quietly uncapped our lens for some dozen seconds, and secured the picture on which our heart was set. A plate of doubtful character was then exposed on the village group, and the lens uncapped. A sitting of a couple of minutes cooled their eagerness; and when they wanted to see the "pictur," their wrath was un-

bounded on being told that ours were dry plates which had to be "brought out" at home. If one can secure, however, a real rustic, gracefully posed in a country scene, it adds much to the force of the picture. A golden rule to remember is this: either take a photograph of a landscape or of a figure; don't try to do both. If the one is to be the centre of interest, make the other entirely subservient to it; if you don't, the one will spoil the other.

Photographers, be they amateurs or not, are always to a certain extent looked down upon by the world at large, be it gentle or simple; and we cannot close without recording one incident which shows a remarkable and perhaps unique expression of the feelings of the population towards them. One day, near the Pyrenees, we were working at our "trade," on a hot and dusty day, dressed in a common blouse to save our more respectable garments beneath it. We had secured many good views (it was in the days of the old "wet" process), and whilst standing with our camera over our shoulder, and mopping our forehead with a handkerchief held in hands apparently not too clean, an old peasant woman, who was trudging along the road with her grandchild toddling beside her, stopped in front of us and looked up and down at us. Pity, commiseration, or what you will, seized the heart of this dear old dame, and she put her hand into an old-fashioned pocket, which was well hidden beneath the short skirts of her dress, and pulled out a sou. She advanced to us, held out the coin (which in astonishment we took), muttered, "Pauvre garçon," and trudged along again. That sou we keep; it reminds us of a kindly French heart, and of the estimation in which the followers of the art are held even by the poorest.

W. DE W. ABNEY.



OTHER HANDS AND OTHER LANDS.



SANS CHANGER. That is possible in fidelity, but utterly impracticable in life. Nay, the great family whose motto it is have not always made the best even of the possibility: they have occasionally been unfaithful to a political brotherhood, and have contradicted their own traditions. And so it is with domestic

and social affections: are they without change? I once saw on the gravestone of a young wife this inscription:—"The Lord watch between thee and me whilst we are separated the one from the other."

That was meant to declare that the heart-broken man would be solitary for the rest of his life; but he was not so, however, for he married again within the year.

And as for life, the other hands—those which are not home-sacred—and even sometimes other lands, lie at its very threshold. School! why, that one word is full of the idea of change, and the thing for which it stands is crammed with the reality. We don't pity boys when they take that first plunge, and leap at last into the cold water of a strange life, after not a few shiverings on the bank. Well, we plunged in also many years since, and what we did they can do. But I think we forget a little. New anxieties have dulled the remembrance of old ones; and Time has placed his rust on the polished steel upon which the past